

all-type program. The design of the bill is to give seniors choices to better fit their families' needs as far as prescription drugs are concerned. So seniors have a choice whether they are going to sign up for the prescription drug coverage.

Also, if you look at the larger body of the bill and look at the choices that the seniors will have, they can actually now have a choice of the type of health insurance coverage that they access. Much like we do here in Congress, they have a decision to make about which plan bests fit their medical need. It puts seniors back into the driver's seat.

One of the, I think, most interesting parts of the bill is we really tried to improve the quality of health care that seniors can receive, much like many in the private sector enjoy today, much like we here as Members of Congress enjoy. We enjoy improved quality of care through accessing preemptive health care screenings. So in the Medicare bill, we included new screenings, diabetic screenings, blood screenings to detect cardiovascular disease. These are tests that are indicative of disease and have a broad array of applications. Medicare participants will now have access to these screenings.

Also, we put in a provision for a free physical for the new entrants to Medicare. There is also now a provision which allows seniors to access a disease management function. I know a lot of us know senior citizens who deal with a lot of specialists, and sometimes those specialists do not talk to one another. Well, this disease management function, while voluntary and optional, will and may help many of our senior citizens.

Also in the Medicare Modernization Act, we try to deal with the very pressing problem of low-income seniors, and we gave help to those who need it; and any senior who falls within 135 percent of the poverty level will now pay very little as far as their health care coverage and certainly as far as prescription drugs. Essentially, their drug bills will be eliminated.

I think the final version of this bill did include a provision which allowed for the creation of health savings accounts, I think something that is revolutionary and will, once again, put the spotlight back on the doctor/patient relationship and putting the seniors back into the driver's seat as far as which type of health care that they can access, and it also ensures that the seniors themselves can make their medical decisions without the intervention of a third party that may not be familiar with the particular health of that senior.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight to make sure that we in this body realize that we have gone and taken the first step toward modernizing health care for seniors. We have given them choice. We have given them hope for a discount on their prescription drug bills. This June, there will be the introduction of discount cards that will afford

seniors up to 50 percent of a discount on the cost of prescription drugs. So there is immediate relief that our seniors across the Nation will experience.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KLINE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I came here tonight to talk about jobs and mismanagement of our budget and economy by the President, but we are going to have a moment's discussion on the previous speaker outlining the Medicare bill.

The fact is the prescription drug, Medicare privatization bill is not working for seniors, and it begs the question, why is the administration spending 80 million of our tax dollars to advertise this bill to try to get seniors convinced that this law works, and it does not even go into effect until 2006? The President has made a decision to spend 80 million tax dollars, instead of putting it into a drug benefit, spend 80 million tax dollars to convince people that this new drug law, this new Medicare privatization law is good for the public, when, in fact, the Medicare privatization bill increases the profits for drug companies in this country by almost \$180 billion; and this drug bill, this privatization bill gives a direct subsidy of tax dollars to insurance companies to Medicare HMOs of \$46 billion.

The reason the bill is not popular, the reason the law is not going to work is it was written by the drug and insurance industries. Why did the drug and insurance industries write the bill? Why did the President allow the drug companies and the insurance companies into the Oval Office to write this privatization bill? Frankly, because of major political contributions from the drug companies and the insurance companies to President Bush and to Republican leadership.

The word on the street in this town is that the drug companies are going to give \$100 million to President Bush's reelection. If that does not tell you something about this drug bill, this Medicare privatization bill, it speaks volumes.

JOB AND MISMANAGEMENT OF THE BUDGET AND ECONOMY BY THE PRESIDENT

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, to shift gears for a moment, Vice President CHENEY came to my State, to Dayton, Ohio, to defend the President's economic record. In Ohio, one out of six manufacturing jobs has been lost since President Bush took office; 300,000 people in Ohio have lost their jobs. That is 2,000 people every week. That is 260 Ohioans have lost their jobs every day since President Bush took the oath of office on January 20, 2001.

The response to this bad news from the President and the Vice President, who seem so out of touch, do not seem

to understand people's anxieties, people's fears, people's difficulties when they lose their jobs, their answer is always more tax cuts for the most privileged people in society, the 1 percent richest people, hoping the tax cuts will trickle down and help the rest of the country and more trade agreements that send jobs overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that instead of Vice President CHENEY going to a fundraiser in Dayton, like he did, and then trying to defend the Bush economic plan, pretty indefensible, difficult thing to do, I wish the Vice President would have been with me in Akron, about 3 weeks ago in my district, meeting with a group of mostly Republican business owners, machine shop owners in Akron in Summit County, Ohio.

Right before I spoke to these 60 owner/operators of small machine shops, tool and dye makers and others, a gentleman walked up and put this stack of fliers on my table, a little bit more than this actually. He said this is 1 month of fliers that he has received from companies around the country that are going out of business. These are fire sale fliers from small businesses, manufacturers that are going out of business because of the Bush economic plan and because of the Bush budget.

Let me just show you some of these. A company in Cleveland, Ohio, auction, going out of business; company in Norristown, Pennsylvania, public auction; public auction company in Nashua, New Hampshire; machine tool auction, Tipp City, north of Dayton, Ohio; facility closed, all must go, Medina, Ohio; absolute auction, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, everything must go; plant closed, everything sells, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Marion, Ohio, complete shop close-out action; high-tech manufacturing plant closeout, Elk Grove, Illinois, near Chicago; large-capacity fabricating machine shop closing, Bingham, Massachusetts; precision shop, CNC job shop downsizing, Houston, Texas, President's own State; complete stamping and machine tool shops, two of them going out of business, Mansfield, Ohio, the community I grew up in; public auction, Charlotte, North Carolina, everything must sell, plant closes; South El Monte, California, facility closing; public auction, Newark, New York. One thing after another.

The President does not get it. We should extend unemployment benefits. We should pass the bipartisan Crane-Rangel bill, which will give incentives, not the way the President does to all large companies including those that are moving out of the country, but those that provide jobs in the United States of America. This simply cannot keep happening in our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear